

Cystic Fibrosis: Caring for Your Child at Home

Home care for your child with cystic fibrosis, or CF, focuses on improving digestion and clearing as much mucus from the lungs as possible.

You may find it hard to fit in all the daily treatments, at first.

You may need help keeping track of everything.

But, in time, you'll build a routine, and build your confidence, which will make things easier.

The time you spend doing treatment each day is so important, because treatment helps your child feel better from day to day.

It can help keep your child out of the hospital by helping prevent infections and complications, like long-term lung damage or diabetes.

And, the biggest reason of all, treatment can help your child live longer.

Your CF care team will prescribe a treatment routine just for your child.

They'll teach you how, when, and how long to do treatments.

There are two main focuses in treating CF: treatment for the lungs, and treatment for the digestive system.

Lung treatment includes inhaled medicines --medicines your child breathes in-- that help open the lungs and thin the mucus, and airway clearance therapies that help loosen and clear the mucus out of the lungs.

Treating the digestive system includes drinking a lot of water, adding enzymes to food, and eating lots of salty, high-protein, and high-fat foods.

It may also include vitamins or stool softeners.

Your care team will give you tips for every age and stage.

For example, for a baby, you might prepare enzymes during the day for nighttime feedings.

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Or for older children, you might add avocado oil to mac and cheese.

You may have to come up with other ways to make things easier for you and your child.

But as your child gets older, they'll discover how treatment makes them feel better.

It can be helpful to know that you are not alone.

You'll have a social worker on your team who can help.

And others who have been there want to share and help.

CF support groups and online parent forums offer lots of tips and advice.

And it can help to remember that everything you're doing to treat CF helps your child live longer and feel better.